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ABSTRACT

This manual describes a regional linkage model developed to bridge the mildly handicapped student's school and post-school job training by using a consortium of local professional personnel (vocational and special educators), representatives of business and industry, and representatives of public and private agencies concerned with work placement of handicapped persons. It first discusses preliminary steps the consortium took, including exploration of ways to create better linkages and examination of obstacles to successful placement of the handicapped and their career-related needs. The next section describes the model that provides for classification of the students by the school and school-based actions in collaboration with parents to facilitate development of vocational/special education programs for mildly handicapped youth. The 19 components of the model are discussed, and the role of the four sectors--schools, home, social service and rehabilitation agencies, and business and industry--that share responsibility for that component is also described. A final discussion focuses on some process issues, namely time constraints and participants' commitment to the project, and three issues related to development of the model: schools as initiators of the process, communication dynamics, and the organizational/individual nature of linkage endeavors. Appendixes include a glossary, lists of project participants and advisory committee members, and an abstract. (YLB)

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A REGIONAL MODEL TO PROMOTE
LINKAGES
TO SUPPORT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
FOR THE HANDICAPPED

prepared by:

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Introduction

Participation in the world of work is important to the survival of a society. Society's workers are individuals who perform physical or mental tasks, usually in exchange for wages. In addition to earning a living, there are other reasons why people work; among them, to gain feelings of self-worth, to demonstrate independence, and to be contributing members of society. The importance of work to an individual is seen in Neff's (1968) observation that "Being a nonworker is a sign of 'second class citizenship' and is strongly associated with reduced feelings of personal worth" (p. 142).

Work, the kinds of purposeful activities in which people engage, may be viewed along a continuum of tasks from those that are simple, concrete and routine to those that are complex and abstract. So, too, handicapped persons may be viewed along a continuum from those who are totally dependent on others for their sustenance to those who are capable of leading independent and productive lives.

At the more able end of the continuum of handicapped persons are those who are mildly handicapped---the group of students toward whom this linkage project was addressed. Mildly handicapped students often appear to be "normal;" however, they deviate from the norm in their academic performance, in their behavior, or both. Under New Jersey's Administrative Code (Title 6: Chapter 28), students classified as educable mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, socially maladjusted, neurologically impaired or perceptually impaired could be included among the mildly handicapped. The handicaps are defined in the glossary, found in Appendix A.

Mildly handicapped individuals can be considered to be doubly handicapped. First, there is their actual handicap---below average academic achievement, or unacceptable and inappropriate behavior, or inadequate social adjustment. Second, there is the invisibility of these handicaps. This lack of an obvious handicap often leads to performance expectations beyond what these individuals can deliver, both as students and as workers. By contrast, persons with sensory impairments (visual or auditory) or physical disabilities have visible evidences of impairment. The mildly handicapped, thus, represent more of an "unknown" to prospective employers; partly due to the ambiguity surrounding the labels applied to them while they are in school.

The schools identify mildly handicapped students, classify them according to the type of handicapping condition, and place them in appropriate educational settings to receive the special education services that they require. The provision of these services is mandated under Public Law 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, and Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

While some mildly handicapped individuals lose their "labels" once they leave school, many do not. They lack the skills needed to adapt to the demands that society places on people who have attained adult status. These individuals require additional support, training and guidance if they are to learn to compete in the marketplace.

While the schools have a primary role to play in preparing handicapped youth to enter the work force, community agencies and the private sector also play an important part in this process. They contribute to finding, placing and supervising handicapped youth and, in this way, aid the handicapped person's adaptation to the world of work. By consoli-

dating the resources of the schools with those of social services agencies and business and industry, it is probable that the gains to the mildly handicapped will be greater than if each worked separately.

A survey of studies concerned with the post-school adjustment of the mildly handicapped indicates that under the best of economic conditions their employment rate is notably lower than for the population as a whole. This situation is further complicated by today's economic picture in the U.S. in which the jobless rate is reaching 10 percent. It was within the context of these realities, combined with the diminished financial and human resources presently available to education and social services, that "A Regional Model to Promote Linkages to Support Vocational Education Programs for the Handicapped" was developed.

Problem Statement

Typically, mildly handicapped individuals have filled unskilled and semi-skilled positions in the work force. Technological advances of the past two decades have dramatically reduced the number of available jobs in these categories. In combination with current economic conditions, this situation represents both a challenge and an opportunity for vocational and special educators in the schools. The challenge is seen as the need to place mildly handicapped students in work settings in competition with seasoned veterans of the work force who are also seeking employment. An opportunity is likewise provided; the chance to examine past efforts as a basis to consolidate and improve vocational special education programs for handicapped youth.

Through the regional linkage project, a generic model was developed to amalgamate the efforts of the schools with organizations that provide services to the handicapped (social service agencies), and those that are prospective job providers (business and industry). The objectives of the project were:

- o to reduce redundancy in the provision of services to handicapped youth within the schools;
- o to create a forum where representatives of organizations and agencies might come together to increase communication and mutual responsiveness to the needs of handicapped youth and adults; and,
- o to coordinate efforts among the schools, social service agencies, and business and industry to improve opportunities for gainful employment of handicapped youth.

Related Research

Providing Vocational Education for the Handicapped

One outgrowth of the financial support provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to special education in the 1950s was increased awareness of the importance of vocational education for handicapped youth. Numerous descriptions of essential components of vocational education programs for handicapped students have been developed (Brolin, 1973; Clark, 1974, 1979; Kolstoe and Frey, 1965; Singer, Oelberg and Smith, 1976). In addition, descriptions of special education work experience programs have proliferated (Cezelka, 1977; Forum, 1980; Jordan, 1978). In the 1960s and 1970s, it was not uncommon for secondary special education teachers to devise and implement both the secondary curriculum and work experience programs for their students.

Most often, these programs evolved in isolation from vocational educators, public and private agencies, and prospective employers. Heller (1981) introduced a recent issue of Exceptional Children devoted to vocational and special education, by noting that although some gains have been made to develop quality secondary special education programs, much remains to be done to improve upon current programming.

Professional recognition of the importance of linking the activities of vocational and special educators led The American Vocational Association to establish the National Association of Vocational Education Special Needs Personnel. A corresponding action was taken by the Council for Exceptional Children when it organized the Division on Career Development in 1978. These actions may be viewed as particularly responsive to professional personnel needs identified in a survey by Clark and Oliverson (1973). They found that despite the complex demands made on secondary special educators and work experience coordinators, many State Education Departments did not require differentiated training. They also found that most states had no specific certification requirements for individuals responsible for providing habilitative educational functions to secondary level handicapped students. More recently, Weisenstein (1976) identified the lack of secondary vocational education programming for handicapped students as a gap in their service delivery continuum. He attributed this lack, in part, to a dearth of appropriately trained personnel to deal with the array of issues associated with providing vocational education to handicapped youth. Even today, it is uncommon to find colleges and universities that provide training specific to the education and vocational habilitation of mildly handicapped youth (LTI Interchange, 1982).

Equally important is Clark's (1974) finding that the provision of work experience programs for handicapped students does not significantly differentiate their post-school adjustment from students for whom no similar programs were provided. He concluded that a significant component was the meshing of community resources to deal with the totality of the handicapped individual's needs. Clark (1975) also raised questions concerning the viability of mainstreaming secondary handicapped students to receive vocational education. It was his contention that such mainstreaming might represent a more, rather than less, restrictive learning environment for mildly handicapped students.

Work Adjustment of the Handicapped

Goldstein's (1964) extensive review of the literature concerned with the social and occupational adjustment of mildly handicapped youth identified a relationship between economic conditions and the availability of employment opportunities open to mildly handicapped persons. His analysis of studies of the vocational status of the retarded, for example, indicated that "the nature of the jobs held by these workers is a function of the technology and the labor market in any given community...(and that when) competition for jobs during recessions and slack periods has been demonstrated to be keen,... the retarded usually lose out to more skilled and more dependable normal workers" (p. 249). A more recent survey of the deaf by Schein and Delk (1974) showed that deaf adults are consistently underemployed relative to their intelligence and their academic attainments.

An equally important finding reported by Goldstein (1964), and supported in more recent literature (Boyan, 1978; Brolin, 1977; Goldstein, 1969), is that the behaviors that interfere with the occupational

adjustment of mildly handicapped youth rarely relate directly to their work performance. Instead, these individuals often lack necessary personal and social skills that are, likewise, reflected in the work setting. For example, Peckham (1951) reported that retarded workers disregarded such job-relevant behaviors as punctuality, personal hygiene, appropriate dress, and the like. Goldstein (1969) reported a survey of the wide range of social service and employment agencies serving handicapped adults in which he attempted to identify behaviors that were perceived to interfere with their socio-occupational adjustment. Of the more than 700 behaviors reported by the different agencies, a majority were within the personal-social sphere.

A recent study dealing with occupational projections in rural and suburban areas (Goldberg and Loos, 1981) found that the most important job skills sought by employers are the abilities to understand and follow oral and written directions, to demonstrate positive work attitudes, and to cooperate with fellow workers. The study also reported that the following skills were most difficult for employers to find in workers: demonstrating positive work attitudes, showing pride in workmanship, and being able to read, write and speak well. In combination, these findings suggest important directions for revising the schools' secondary curriculum for mildly handicapped students to accommodate these needed components of training. Such curriculum modification might well have implications for the potential employability of mildly handicapped youth.

In view of the research findings concerning the present status of secondary programs for the handicapped, and of the post-school adjustment of these individuals, it is clear that present practices must give way to new solutions.

Educational Efforts at Inter-Organizational Linkage

Past efforts to create inter-organizational linkages initiated by the schools have been mainly informal, voluntary attempts at collaboration. One example may be seen in the special education work experience programs that emerged in the 1960s. It was not uncommon for special education teachers to devise and implement both the secondary curriculum and the work experience program for their students (Kokaska, 1968). The programs often evolved with little, if any, support from vocational educators or from agencies outside the schools (Weisenstein, 1976). Likewise, it was not uncommon that mildly handicapped students were mainstreamed into regular education shop classes without consultation with the vocational educator relative to the appropriateness of the placement. Even today, vocational educators are often not involved in the IEP process.

With passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, part of special education's mandate was to provide related services to handicapped individuals. This required that special educators formalize interdisciplinary relationships in order to provide the needed services to students. As a consequence, a mandatory basis for interagency program planning and implementation was established (Martinson, 1982). And, for the first time in the State of New Jersey, under N.J. Chapter 74---Vocational Facilities for the Handicapped, procedures are in place to provide handicapped students with vocational education under the aegis of vocational educators. Implicitly, this action requires that vocational and special educators mesh their expertise on behalf of handicapped students.

In the past five years, both the federal government and numerous states have made initiatives to foster interagency collaboration. At

federal level, the Office of Special Education and the Office of Civil Rights jointly issued a "Memorandum of Understanding" (1980) in which the intent was expressed to coordinate activities in the areas of enforcement, data collection, policy development, and technical assistance activities to states.

A recent New York State report (1979) addressed the need to link services on behalf of the handicapped. Its forceful statement of purpose reads as follows:

"To overcome the constraints imposed by diminishing resources and the tendency on the part of all agencies to act in isolation from each other, it is imperative that there be established a collaborative and cooperative working relationship between the offices and their related agencies in the field. This need exists not only at the State level of administration, but also more critically at the regional and local levels of program and service delivery."

This report contains a review of regional meetings held to identify issues concerned with linking the State's special education, occupational education, the vocational rehabilitation programs for handicapped youth and adults. From these meetings a listing of key issues was generated, along with recommendations for ways in which the issues might be addressed. The key issues identified were: (1) communication/information flow; (2) attitudes; (3) policies and procedures; (4) resources; and (5) programming from kindergarten through adulthood. It is likely that a similar listing would be reflected at LEA levels.

Currently, the State of New Jersey is engaged in the "New Jersey Model Linkage Project" in which efforts are being directed to coordinating post-school services for the handicapped in two of the State's counties. Preliminary results of this one year effort (White, 1981) indicate that:

- many agency personnel were meeting for the first time and had little prior history of working together,
- the process of effecting linkages among agencies is a slow one,
- The process of effecting linkages relies heavily on the development of positive interpersonal relationships, and
- it is likely that alternative models are needed to respond to different levels of availability of services in demographically diverse regions.

A study to identify major policy-related problems confronting SEA personnel in providing vocational education to handicapped students was recently completed by Greeman and Phelps (1982). They reported that of the eight major problem areas identified, the top-ranked problem related to interagency cooperation, followed by concern with funding and fiscal policy. Such data give added impetus to the need to forge working alliances at local and regional levels, since most efforts to date have been directed toward establishing macro-linkages, with far less attention given to making them operational (Albright et al., 1981; LTI Interchange, January 1981; LTI Interchange, March 1981). This concern is well-expressed by Dial (1978) in his statement of the need to provide handicapped youth with every opportunity to succeed, based on the education provided them during and after their school years. He notes that:

"...handicapped youths are being prepared to live, work and compete in a society that determines the rules by which they live and that these rules in most instances do not provide exceptions for the handicapped. Therefore, experiences must be planned to prepare youths to live by the rules of society and determine success by society's criteria" (p. 35).

Procedures

Notification of the award of the linkage project grant was received by the Educational Improvement Center/Northeast in mid-August. In late August, Supervisors of Child Study and County Career Education Coordinators for Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Union counties were informed of the regional project and their assistance in its implementation was sought. At a meeting attended by representatives of each County Office in early September, an overview of the project was provided, and criteria for selection of districts for participation in the project were discussed and formalized. The criteria included demographics, in addition to racial and sex balance in the types of vocational education programs currently in progress at the sites. Initially, two school districts were nominated from each county to participate in the project. Subsequently, additional representation was sought from Area and County Vocational-Technical Schools.

Local superintendents of schools were contacted by letter to inform them of the project, to seek their support, and to request that they identify appropriate staff within their districts to participate in the project. District participants were chosen based on their involvement and expertise in special education and/or vocational education. Concurrently, an Advisory Board was constituted to provide guidance for conduct of the project.

Along with vocational and special educators, representatives of the private sector, and of social service and rehabilitation agencies were invited to share their experiences, expertise, and ideas concerning ways to improve interagency cooperation. The project's participants met in formal sessions five times over a period of seven months. In addition,

a number of sub-committees were formed to focus on specific issues identified by the larger group. The sub-committees explored ways to effect better linkages among professionals within the schools, and between the schools and other agencies and organizations. In addition, obstacles to successful placement of handicapped youth in competitive employment and career-related needs of these youth were examined. The sub-committees met frequently to draft components of the linkage model for presentation to the large group. During the course of this project, more than 50 professionals representing education, community and state agencies, and the business/industry sectors contributed to the development of the regional linkage model. The model focuses on how organizations can coordinate their efforts for the benefit of mildly handicapped youth.

This manual was reviewed by vocational and special educators, and administrators preparatory to revision. In addition, other products generated as an outcome of this grant include "People...Just like You," a handbook for line supervisors of the handicapped, and "The Educator and the Handicapped: An Informational Guide," a pamphlet to familiarize regular educators and prospective employers with information about the mildly handicapped.

Vocational Education for the Mildly Handicapped:

A Linkage Model

The goals of education are to provide all children with the knowledge and skills necessary to function, participate, and contribute to society. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are only a few of the basic skills needed to function successfully in an increasingly complex world. Today's schools are expanding their curriculums to help students meet the challenges of a highly technical and competitive society.

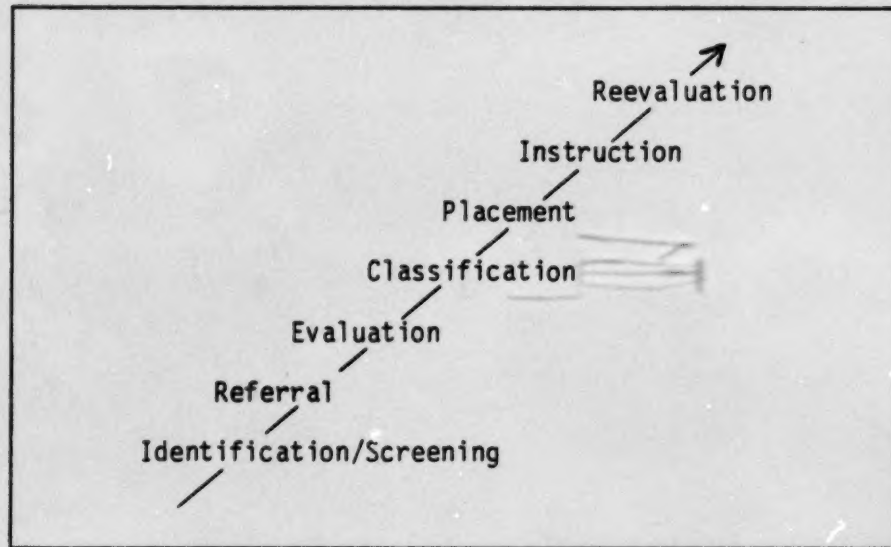
Mildly handicapped students have particular obstacles to overcome in order to function productively in society. Since these students often demonstrate learning, behavioral, and social adjustment handicaps that can interfere with their successful transition from school to adult life, it is incumbent on the schools to plan and implement programs to increase their prospects for productive post-school adjustment. To do less would be to deny them their right to a free, appropriate public education.

To assist the mildly handicapped to succeed once they leave school, education must address the individual needs of these students early in their school careers. Efforts must begin at the time that the student is classified as handicapped if the goal of placing mildly handicapped youth in competitive employment is to be reached. Figure 1 illustrates the process by which students are classified as handicapped.

For mildly handicapped students, the classification process is initiated most often after the child enters school. Through a variety of procedures, e.g., group achievement tests, school performance, teacher

Figure 1

The Special Education Classification Process



observation, a student may be referred to one of the district's Child Study Teams for more formal evaluation of his/her performance. Such evaluation might include an array of diagnostic tests, individual achievement tests, a psychological evaluation, in addition to other forms of assessment deemed necessary by the Team. Following the evaluation, IF the student is classified as educationally handicapped, the Child Study Team, with participation by appropriate special and regular educators and the child's parent(s) or guardian, develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is implemented by special and/or regular educators in the educational setting(s) where the student is placed. The student's performance is evaluated at regular intervals, to assess progress, to determine whether special education services continue to be needed and, if so, to revise the student's IEP accordingly. The importance of the IEP for secondary level mildly handicapped students cannot be overestimated since this document represents a major

in-district effort to link the professionals who are responsible for the delivery of instruction to the student. Throughout the classification process, the student's parent(s) or guardian are involved in decision making that will influence their child's education.

School-Based Actions

Since the schools are charged with preparing students to cope with society's demands as adults, it is not surprising that they also assume a major role in coordinating the delivery of services to students with outside organizations and agencies. However, before the schools can reach beyond their boundaries to establish productive linkages, they must first identify and maintain district linkages. In essence, the schools must concern themselves with internal coordination of efforts to provide vocational education to mildly handicapped students before they are in a position to ascertain the external linkages that are needed.

District staff, in cooperation with parents, play a significant role in determining the scope and quality of the vocational education programs available to handicapped students within the district, county or region. With this in mind, project participants identified significant actions which might be taken by district staff in collaboration with parents, to facilitate the development of vocational education programs for mildly handicapped youth. These actions are outlined in Figure 2, and are discussed below.

Figure 2

School-Based Actions to Facilitate Vocational/Special Education Programs

DISTRICT/SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- o Develop policies that demonstrate district commitment to vocational education programs for the handicapped
- o Set policies for program implementation
- o Establish a Vocational Advisory Board
- o Demonstrate support for ongoing curriculum development
- o Promote in-district communication among professional staff
- o Develop procedures for communication with social service agencies
- o Create a resource bank of public/private sector employers
- o Coordinate inservice training for staff and parents
- o Establish mechanisms to create community awareness

VOCATIONAL/SPECIAL EDUCATORS

- o Provide instruction
- o Provide experiences that integrate academic and vocational content
- o Identify other school staff engaged in similar work
- o Identify areas where shared expertise can facilitate the work of both parties
- o Develop and maintain lines of communication with other school personnel, parents, social service agencies, etc.
- o Participate in ongoing curriculum development
- o Develop job placements
- o Coordinate and supervise on-job training
- o Refer students to outside agencies, as needed
- o Contribute to resource bank of public/private sector employers
- o Identify areas for inservice training

SUPPORT/RELATED SERVICES PROFESSIONALS

- o Provide direct service to students in such areas as guidance, psychology, speech, audiology, social work, health, remediation
- o Develop and maintain communication with teachers, parents and students
- o Identify students needing referral to social service agencies, and make referrals in coordination with vocational/special educators
- o Assist in the delivery of training to teachers and parents

PARENTS

- o Participate in decision making relative to the child
- o Participate in school/community advocacy groups to promote understanding of handicapped children
- o Communicate with school personnel

District/School Administrators. Central office and school-based administrators establish program priorities that ultimately determine program viability. By demonstrating organizational commitment, through enactment of policies that support implementation of vocational programs for the handicapped, administrators can contribute to making these programs work. Administrators can also provide leadership by bringing together staff, representing different disciplines, who have joint responsibility for educating mildly handicapped youth. Fostering communication among these individuals can lead to increased sharing and collaboration. Too, these professionals need to be given the time to collaborate: specifically, time is needed to establish the direction for the vocational education programs; to determine the goals and objectives of the programs and to plan their implementation; and to develop curriculum collaboratively so that programming is mutually reinforcing for the student rather than segmented. In addition, through community outreach activities, the administrator can provide visibility for the program at the same time that community awareness is being developed. As a culmination of community awareness, a Vocational Advisory Board could be named to review program actions and to offer assistance and support.

Vocational/Special Educators. The first job of the educator is to instruct students. Since there are often several educators who share responsibility for providing instruction to mildly handicapped secondary students, it is important that these professionals have opportunities to coordinate their curriculums and the teaching strategies they use with particular students. The first opportunity for such sharing is at the student's IEP conference. It is worthwhile, however, to plan subsequent meetings that focus on broader program development issues. Related to this action is the need to incorporate the development of skills,

attitudes and behaviors sought by the vocational educator (and prospective employers) in the special education curriculum as precursors to productive on-job placement. By coordinating curriculum development efforts, the probability is greater that the student will receive a mutually reinforcing program and that learning will be increased.

Job development, and the coordination and supervision of job placement are activities where duplication of efforts often occurs, even among professionals in the same school district. If program decisions are made in concert by those who are responsible for providing instruction, there is greater prospect that the resulting program for the student will be more coordinated.

Ideally, referral to outside agencies and organizations should be coordinated centrally within the district. If one individual has responsibility to initiate and maintain these contacts, positive relationships can be built, based on a mutuality of concern for the student. By having professionals from different disciplines contribute to development of a resource bank, an expanding array of possible community contacts can be identified. This action increases the job development and job placement opportunities for the professionals who have these responsibilities, and improves opportunities for mildly handicapped students to be placed in appropriate work settings.

Support/Related Services Professionals. Related services for the handicapped are those which the schools are required to provide to allow the student to benefit from a free, appropriate public education. These services support and augment the instructional portion of the student's program. The professionals involved in providing support or related services, e.g., psychologists, guidance counselors, social workers,

etc., have in addition to providing services in their particular areas of expertise, the following tasks: (1) to identify for referral students who require assistance that is beyond the responsibility of the schools to provide, (2) to assist in the planning and development of training for staff and the community, and (3) to develop and maintain communication with the student, his/her major instructors, and parents. Regular communication among those who are involved with a handicapped student can improve both the quality and timeliness of related services that are provided to him/her.

Parents. Parents or guardians of handicapped students have the right to participate in all aspects of decision making that affect their child's education. As with the other groups, the need for two-way communication between home and school is essential. In addition, parents who become program advocates by participating in community awareness activities help to increase the support for vocational education programs for their children by making the programs more visible.

School-Community Linkage

While it is the schools that bear primary responsibility for assessing, planning and developing vocational education programs for the handicapped, they cannot respond to all the needs of this population alone. Resources that exist in the community must be amalgamated and coordinated to assure that the handicapped individual is offered the fullest possible range of opportunities for post-school adjustment. The four sectors that have been identified to meet these needs, through their combined efforts, are: the schools, the home, social service and rehabilitation agencies, and business and industry. The process of linking these diverse sectors for collaborative action is complex.

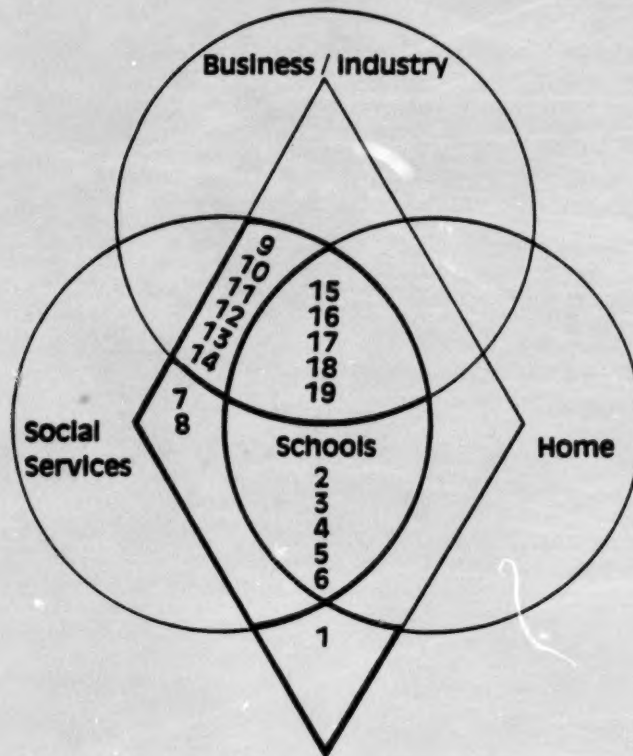
Linkages need to be forged long before the student completes his/her education if effective support for the individual is to be provided.

Figure 3, the Community-Based Linkage Model, illustrates major relationships among the sectors as these sectors converge to provide vocational opportunities for mildly handicapped youth. The schools, represented by the diamond, are centrally placed. The three circles, from left to right, show the social agencies, business/industry, and home sectors. The numbers reflect the essential components of the linkage model. Components that reflect shared responsibility indicate a need to coordinate action, and are portrayed accordingly in the Figure. In these instances, the schools take the lead in the process of establishing linkage to the appropriate agency or organization, and in coordinating the provision of services. Each component of the model is discussed below.

Interdisciplinary communication (1). As shown in Figure 2, the involvement of all relevant school personnel in planning vocational education programs for mildly handicapped students is essential. Often staff are involved whose areas of expertise are not special education. It is important to establish open lines of communication to acquaint them with the nature and needs of this special population. In this way, staff are better able to carry out their responsibilities relative to educating handicapped students as effectively as possible.

Interdisciplinary communication increases each educator's awareness and understanding of other school programs---their philosophies, goals, and instructional approaches---and their importance to the student's overall education. Using a team approach to provide vocational education programs for handicapped students should greatly enhance their

COMMUNITY-BASED LINKAGE MODEL



COMPONENTS:

Schools

1. Interdisciplinary communication

Schools / Social Services / Home

2. Independent living skills
3. Remedial instruction
4. Vocational counseling
5. Parent/family involvement
6. Coordination of referrals

Schools / Social Services

7. Supportive/related services
8. Vocational assessment

Schools / Social Services / Business

9. Job development
10. Curriculum development
11. "Hands-On" vocational training
12. World of work experiences
13. Resources bank
14. In-service training

Schools / Social Services / Business / Home

15. Career education
16. Vocational Advisory Board
17. Community awareness/sensitivity to needs of the handicapped
18. Awareness of Federal/State laws
19. Follow-up

learning and social adjustment. Therefore, the schools have a responsibility to create a forum that allows this type of communication and cooperation to occur.

Independent living skills (2). Independent living skills are skills an individual needs in order to function productively as an adult. Secondary programs for the mildly handicapped often emphasize the development of these work-related skills since they influence the individual's ability to get and keep a job. There are many independent living skills taught in the schools that have implication for positive post-school adjustment; for example, maintaining interpersonal relationships, communicating effectively, maintaining personal hygiene and appearance, traveling independently, and managing money. These skills are in addition to academic and work-skills development.

Independent living skills development should begin as soon as the student is classified as handicapped, and continue throughout his/her school career at increasingly more sophisticated levels. For example, money management at the elementary level might focus on recognizing money denominations, using money in exchange for goods, making change, and the like. At the secondary level, money management might emphasize personal budget development, and such banking skills as maintaining savings and checking accounts.

For students who are not ready for competitive employment when they reach school-leaving age, there are programs in social service and rehabilitation agencies that offer vocational as well as independent living skills training. These programs, which are sometimes referred to as "work adjustment training," should be known to the schools so that appropriate referrals can be made.

Parents, too, can support the development of independent living skills in their children. The schools can provide assistance to the family in learning how to teach many needed skills.

In summary, independent living skills development is a vital part of the schools' curriculum to prepare handicapped youth for gainful employment. Possessing vocational skills alone will not guarantee that a mildly handicapped student will be able to get and keep a job.

Remedial instruction (3). To provide an appropriate education for handicapped students, remedial instruction is sometimes necessary. Remediation may include individual and/or small group instruction provided by special educators and focused on specific deficit areas, or by specialists in specific academic areas, e.g., reading, mathematics. The remedial instruction provided supplements the student's ongoing program.

Vocational counseling (4). Vocational counseling is any formal discussion of issues that pertains to work experience. It includes helping the student to choose a job or field that matches his/her abilities and interests, and assisting the student to get and keep a job. Vocational counselors work with students on concrete tasks such as filling out job applications and developing interview strategies, in addition to more abstract content, e.g., developing positive work attitudes, exploring the student's feelings about self, abilities and work. Vocational counseling should begin at the secondary level as the student approaches the time for job training and/or job placement. Handicapped students need to be carefully counseled, since their handicaps may be a major factor in determining the types of jobs for which they are best suited. Counseling must be closely related to vocational assessment (see #8), since both activities assist the student to plan his/her career direction.

Whether the student is ready for competitive employment at high school graduation or not, it is important that the schools continue their involvement with the student. Involvement may take the form of continued vocational counseling, or referral to the many community agencies that provide such counseling. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, in addition to many mental health and family service agencies, offers vocational counseling. It is the school's responsibility to link the student to these services, to plan cooperatively with the agencies, and to provide follow-up. It is incumbent upon the schools to develop referral systems to assure that each student receives the services that he/she needs.

Parents also have a role to play in vocational counseling, owing to the influence they often exert on their youngsters' career choices. Parents' desires and preferences must be considered, as well as their concerns, fears, and expectations. Educators who have worked with parents of handicapped youth have identified the following as important issues faced by parents: (1) the wish for the child to pursue higher education rather than vocational training, and resulting disappointment at the realization that this may be an unrealistic goal; (2) an unrealistic view of the youngster's strengths, abilities, and weaknesses; (3) sex stereotyping about particular jobs that may interfere with parents allowing their child to enter a particular vocation; and (4) hesitancy to allow the youngster to venture out independently, fearing for the child's safety. Vocational counselors must be sensitive to these issues and to the needs and concerns expressed by parents while at the same

time helping the student plan for his/her future. Thus, it may be seen that vocational counseling requires an understanding of both the student and his/her family, as part of the counseling process.

Parent involvement (5). Parent involvement is essential in the education of the handicapped, both because it is mandated under Public Law 94-142, and because of the influence that parents have over the lives of their children. Parents are involved in classification and placement decisions concerning their handicapped child, in the development of his/her IEP, and in referral to support services either inside or outside the schools. School personnel must be aware of parental attitudes toward work and work training, for without family cooperation, the school's efforts cannot succeed.

Where needed, social service agencies can be utilized in conjunction with the school's support personnel. At times, family difficulties may be extreme, to the point that they interfere with the child's school performance. If family counseling is beyond the scope of services provided by the schools, it is the school's responsibility to refer the family to an agency that can provide the needed services.

In addition, the schools should provide training opportunities for parents to inform them of their rights and the rights of their child, to increase their understanding of their child's handicap, and to assist them to cope with the complex problem of rearing a handicapped child. Experts from the community can also be important resources for parents. Equally important, parents meeting together can serve as both a source of mutual support and source of information. Together, all of these contacts can assist parents to mobilize their own resources, and those of the community, in the interest of their child.

Coordination of referrals (6). The schools must take the lead to coordinate referrals to social service and rehabilitation agencies, and to private industry. The schools can commit staff, time, and other resources to the development of linkages to all segments of the community that have the potential to serve the needs of the handicapped. The process of coordinating referrals is begun when it is determined that a particular agency or organization has the capability to provide specified services to a handicapped individual and/or the family. Referral involves making initial contact, articulating the services that are needed, and continuing to communicate with the outside resource during the time that services are provided to insure that the needs of the referred individual(s) are being met. The schools' recognition of the importance of collaboration, and the establishment of procedures for implementation, are essential to the development of a well-coordinated referral process.

Support/related services (7). Public Law 94-142 mandates the provision of any related services "as required to assist the handicapped child to benefit from special education." Support/related services include those additional services that address specific needs of a handicapped child that may interfere with his/her school performance. The Council for Exceptional Children has prepared the following partial listing of related services that should be available for handicapped students: (1) transportation, (2) early identification, (3) medical services, (4) occupational therapy, (5) physical therapy, (6) speech therapy, (7) audiology, (8) school health services, (9) psychological services, (10) counseling services in the schools, and (13) recreation. If, for any reason, the schools cannot provide needed support/related

services, they must coordinate their efforts with community agencies in the provision of these services for school-age handicapped students.

Vocational assessment (8). Vocational assessment of handicapped students is the starting point that allows the schools to plan appropriate vocational training programs for them. Vocational assessment enables the school, as well as the student, to gain an understanding of his/her abilities, learning and training needs, and limitations. Vocational assessment contributes to decision making about the types of work--and work environments--that are most congruent with the student's abilities and interests.

A comprehensive vocational assessment consists of medical, psychological, educational and social evaluations, in addition to a standardized diagnostic instrument to determine the student's vocational aptitudes and interests. Also included are work samples and hands-on activities that simulate occupational tasks. The schools can develop their own vocational assessment tools (see Figure 4 for a sample form), adapt tools already in use, or contract with social and rehabilitation agencies that conduct such assessments. If the schools contract with an outside source, it is important that staff be designated to act as liaison between the school and the agency. Coordination is important during all phases of vocational assessment, since it is a continuing process. Whether managed within or outside the schools, the resulting information offers important guidelines that should be incorporated in the student's IEP, and into subsequent program planning for the student.

KEY:

- 1 = excellent
 2 = good
 3 = adequate
 4 = needs improvement
 5 = poor

WORK ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS
PROFILEDRAFT: LINKAGE PROJECT
4/12/82

Name: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____

WORK ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

• Demonstrates on-time attendance	1	2	3	4	5
• Demonstrates regular attendance	1	2	3	4	5
• Demonstrates good personal hygiene habits	1	2	3	4	5
• Demonstrates good use of time	1	2	3	4	5
• Practices safety toward self & others	1	2	3	4	5
• Shows perseverance at a task	1	2	3	4	5
• Works independently at a task	1	2	3	4	5
• Works accurately and neatly	1	2	3	4	5
• Completes assignments on time	1	2	3	4	5
28 • Understands the relationship between his/her productivity and salary/job retention	1	2	3	4	5
• Works overtime willingly, if needed	1	2	3	4	5

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

• Shows courtesy and respect to fellow workers and clients	1	2	3	4	5
• Shows respect for the rights of others	1	2	3	4	5
• Shows respect for the property of others	1	2	3	4	5
• Cooperates with:					
(a) supervisor(s)	1	2	3	4	5
(b) fellow workers	1	2	3	4	5
(c) clients	1	2	3	4	5

BASIC WORK SKILLS

• Communicates adequately with:					
(a) supervisor(s)	1	2	3	4	5
(b) fellow workers	1	2	3	4	5
(c) clients	1	2	3	4	5
• Understands and follows written instructions	1	2	3	4	5
• Understands and follows oral instructions	1	2	3	4	5
• Demonstrates appropriate computation skills	1	2	3	4	5
• Maintains accurate and appropriate records	1	2	3	4	5
• Meets standards of quality that are set	1	2	3	4	5
• Demonstrates initiative by . . .					
(a) planning, making, or assembling job-related items	1	2	3	4	5
(b) making appropriate "next step" choices	1	2	3	4	5
(c) adjusting, repairing, maintaining job-related equipment	1	2	3	4	5
(d) anticipating needs of job and/or clients	1	2	3	4	5
(e) applying concepts, principles & procedures to tasks different from those in which learned	1	2	3	4	5
(f) instructing others in job-related tasks	1	2	3	4	5

PERSONAL BEHAVIOR

• Values own worth and dignity	1	2	3	4	5
• Assumes personal responsibility for the consequences of his/her decisions	1	2	3	4	5
• Accepts constructive criticism	1	2	3	4	5
• Copes constructively with failure	1	2	3	4	5
• Functions well under pressure	1	2	3	4	5
• Adapts to change in the work setting	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 4

Job development (9). Job development is an ongoing process that requires cooperation among the schools, social service agencies, and business and industry. For this reason, the local education agency should allocate staff and resources to perform job development functions. Job developers spend most of their time identifying appropriate job placements for students, developing positive working relationships with prospective employers, readying students for job placement, and providing follow-up once the placement has been made. Job development requires the continuous assessment of the student's appropriateness for the job, and the job's appropriateness for the student since both the student and the job setting may change over time. Job development also involves attending to the employer's needs and concerns, since a job developer is making a commitment to the employer that is both short- and long-term. Short-term gains are seen as a student's successful performance in a job placement; long-term gains are seen in the developer's maintenance of the job site for future placement of students.

Numerous avenues are available through which job development can occur. Among them are: (1) having students gather information about possible job placements from family and friends and (2) having students note the names of companies and businesses that are on the route they take to school. Public and private employment agencies may also be useful, as are social service and rehabilitation agencies. Agencies that work to place handicapped clients are often involved in vocational networks that share the names of employers who have demonstrated a commitment to hire the handicapped. In addition, small, local businesses are good sources of jobs as are local hospitals, nursing homes, and unions. The Chamber of Commerce and the Private Industry Council (PIC) are, likewise, useful contacts for job developers.

When initial contact is made, the prospective employer should be informed about the school's vocational programs, the types of training offered, the nature of the student population that the job developer intends to place, and the goals and procedures used for job development. Employers might be invited to tour the vocational program in school to observe students at work. Following initial contact, the job developer visits the work site to perform a job analysis. Job analysis includes breaking a job down into its component tasks, and identifying the skills required to perform each task. Where indicated, the job developer might suggest modifying tasks to allow a handicapped worker to perform the job satisfactorily.

After a student is placed, the job developer should maintain frequent contact with the organization, including visiting the site, to monitor the student's progress and to provide support to the student's supervisor. Most employers will cooperate with job developers whom they believe to be sensitive, and responsive to the needs of the employing organization. Job developers and employers must develop mutual trust and respect if present and future job development efforts are to succeed.

At the same time that the job developer works with prospective employers, he/she also is involved in preparing students for the world of work. Job developers also need to assess their handicapped students on work-readiness skills (see Figure 4). It is important that information concerning the student's strengths and limitations be communicated candidly to employers to establish a level of trust, and to set realistic expectations for student performance.

Curriculum development (10). To develop the vocational and independent living skills required of an individual for positive socio-occupational adjustment at maturity, continuing attention to the secondary level curriculum is needed. This is especially important when dealing with handicapped youth. Secondary special educators in collaboration with vocational educators should reevaluate their curriculums at regular intervals to make certain that they reinforce each other, and to assess the curriculums in relation to students' performance. Where needed, the curriculums should be revised to reflect newly identified content needs. Information from employers is often helpful to provide insight about new technologies and other changes that should be incorporated into the curriculum.

Curriculum development is an evolutionary process that must keep pace with the changes in society. Its importance is seen in preparing the handicapped student to be a viable addition to the work force.

Hands-On vocational training (11). Pre-vocational training and exploration enables students to acquire specific skills and to identify the kinds of work that interest them. By law, handicapped students must have access to all pre-vocational and vocational training that is available in the schools that is appropriate to their needs. Vocational training includes a variety of experiences, e.g., industrial arts, clerical training, food services, etc., and allows students to sample several different work experiences.

"Hands-On" vocational training provides a way for teachers to assess a student's ability to attend to a task, to follow directions, and to work cooperatively with others. In addition, teachers are able to

identify work skills and attitudes in which the student is deficient; deficits that serve as a basis for subsequent instruction. Overall, the information gained during the student's vocational training experience may be used to guide his/her decisions about continued courses of study. Vocational educators may need assistance in adapting their courses of study and/or their facilities to meet the needs of the handicapped. Special educators have a responsibility to facilitate the mainstreaming of their students into these vocational programs.

"Hands-On" vocational training is an effective tool for assessment, work-readiness, and skills development. It can also increase a student's self-esteem and make him/her feel more competent and confident to enter a work placement.

World of work experiences (12). World of work experiences offer the student a transition from in-school training to competitive employment, and provide the student exposure to various types of jobs available in the community. Cooperative education programs, work study programs, volunteer placements, CETA jobs, and after-school jobs all offer the handicapped student first hand opportunities to experience the world of work.

The schools have a responsibility to develop realistic work experiences for students, usually through staff responsible for job development. Job developers need to know the work-relevant characteristics of their students, and to match these characteristics with the demands of particular jobs. Employers should be able to provide general information concerning the skills needed to manage specific jobs within their organizations. More definitive information about the job may be obtained through a job analysis.

Job developers can also arrange to take students to tour different work settings to see, first hand, different types of jobs being performed and the skills needed to perform them. Sometimes, students will identify job preferences and formulate questions and concerns about particular jobs that can be dealt with back in the classroom. Before organizing a job tour, the job developer should contact all employers to be visited, and should provide the following information: group size, the purpose of the tour, grade level, and the kinds of information that would be most useful to the students. If special accommodations are needed for any of the handicapped students, this information should also be shared with the organization's contact person.

Work experiences to which the handicapped student is exposed increase in value according to the extent to which they are related to in-school vocational programs that support the world of work experience.

Resource bank (13). Countywide resource directories (see Appendix D) provide information about a wide range of social and rehabilitative services available to community residents. These listings explain the services offered by each organization or agency, and include information concerning the target population(s) to be served. Likewise, local Chambers of Commerce and Private Industrial Councils may make listings of their memberships available to appropriate school personnel.

These sources represent a good starting point for job developers since they acquaint him/her with local community services available to handicapped individuals and their families. To make the fullest use of these resources, the schools might locate them centrally so that all who need them can have access to them, and arrange to have the resources updated as regular intervals.

In-service training (14). Public Law 94-142 mandates the provision of a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) as part of implementation of the Law. In collaboration with school staff, parents and representatives of the community, school administrators must identify training needs, and plan and implement in-service training for all school personnel who deal with handicapped students.

Private industry can help identify staff training needs by keeping the schools abreast of changes in technology which require instruction and should be incorporated into the vocational curriculum. These changes typically require additional training for the teachers who are responsible for delivering instruction to students as well. Social service agencies can assist the schools to provide needed training, since these agencies often have staff and resources allocated to perform training functions. In summary, the schools should make every effort to identify and use all appropriate community resources as vehicles for staff development.

Career education (15). Career education is defined in the New Jersey State Plan for Career Education as "any purposeful, collaborative, developmental effort by educators, community, business-industry-labor, and government groups directed at providing learners with the skills and attitudes needed to adapt to the changes in an occupational society. This aim provides learners with:

- o basic, academic, and vocational skills
- o the ability to make informed career decisions

- o an opportunity to master those developmental tasks associated with life's various stages, through curriculum, counseling, and community."

(State Plan for Career Education, FY 1980-1983, State of New Jersey, Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education and Career Preparation.)

Upon graduation from high school handicapped students often lack vocational skills and related competencies that are crucial to successful post-school adjustment. These lacks may include negative work attitudes and habits, and inappropriate social skills and behaviors that interfere with adjustment to the work setting. Even if the student is competent in a vocational skill, he/she may still be unable to travel independently or to manage his/her money. Equally important, mildly handicapped youth may be unaware of career opportunities and options that exist, or they may have an unrealistic estimate of their abilities.

To address all of these issues, career education is essential since it covers a broad range of issues that contribute to the individual's understanding of work, of one's role as a worker, and as a productive citizen. Career education emphasizes the meaning that work has in all people's lives: working to earn wages AND to engage in productive and fulfilling activity. For the handicapped person, this is important since the assumption of adult responsibilities is often equated with one's ability to work.

Career education should be provided from kindergarten through high school, and should be infused into the regular curriculum. Career education necessitates ongoing curriculum development to maintain relationships between academic subjects and career-related skills. Mathematics,

reading and language arts, and the sciences can all be infused with career and vocational significance. Emphasis needs to be placed on the functional use of academics, so that what is being taught in the classroom can be used by the student in his/her everyday life.

Career education incorporates the community as part of its curriculum. Trips to large and small businesses expose the student to the "real world." Trips to recreational and social service agencies increase awareness of the many resources available in the community. Trips to educational and training programs allow the student to view the many options he/she has when exploring vocational alternatives.

To make career education successful, positive relationships between the schools and the community must exist. Regular communication between the schools, community agencies, and the private sector is essential. The private sector can inform the schools of technological changes, and changes in job requirements that should influence the types of training that students receive in order to be adequately prepared to enter the work force. The schools also need close involvement with social service agencies so that the services these agencies provide are appropriately used, and so that procedures for obtaining needed services are implemented.

It is equally important for the schools to be aware of post-school options for mildly handicapped students who are not "job-ready" when they leave school. Training and counseling services are available, in addition to educational programs that address both occupational and independent living skills development. It is important that the school and the student select the type of program that would be most useful to pursue, and that arrangements for transition into that program be made well before the student leaves school.

Vocational advisory council (16). Public Law 94-482, the Vocational Education Act, mandates that local education agencies receiving federal funds under the Act establish a vocational advisory council. The council provides a source of expertise to the schools regarding the world of work that students are being prepared to enter. The council also increases the schools' sensitivity to the needs and expectations of business and industry, and helps to translate these into educational plans. In addition, the council helps to assure that the vocational education programs provided by the schools are comprehensive, relevant, and of high quality. Finally, the vocational advisory council serves to link the schools to community members who can be of direct assistance in helping the schools meet their vocational program goals.

The composition of the vocational advisory council should reflect the constituencies the council represents, e.g., educators, representatives from local government agencies and from community agencies and organizations, representatives from the business/industry/ labor sector, and parents. This group should be used to advocate for, and assist in the development of vocational programs and opportunities for handicapped students. And, since the development of successful vocational education programs involves the coordinated efforts of the various segments of the community, the vocational advisory council also serves as a model for establishing viable community-based linkages with the schools.

Community awareness (17). Schools, parents, and the public and private sectors all have a part to play in increasing public awareness of the needs of handicapped persons. The private sector can publicize

special employment training programs they operate for the handicapped; schools and community agencies can launch similar publicity campaigns.

Parents of handicapped children can be an especially influential force in helping their communities to be more sensitive and responsive to the needs of handicapped persons. They should be encouraged to form advocacy groups. People are sometimes ill-informed about who the handicapped are, and about how similar to or different from the rest of us they are. Such lack of information often breeds fear, and even contempt, among otherwise intelligent people. Therefore, it is important that parents and other community leaders provide forums where myths about the handicapped can give way to informed knowledge, understanding, and support for equity for the handicapped in the community. The more handicapped people are integrated into the mainstream of community life, the better their chances are to be productive and contributing citizens.

Awareness of federal/state laws (18). School boards set policies that are consistent with state and federal education laws. It is the responsibility of the school's administration to implement these policies. One important aspect of this responsibility is to inform community members of mandates that have an impact on the education of their children, and of changes that occur in the laws. Those most directly affected by mandated provisions for handicapped children are the students and their parents. However, it is equally important that all personnel who deal with the handicapped, in any capacity, receive information and training to prepare them to manage their responsibilities effectively. Under Public Law 94-142, such a training provision exists in the form of the mandate for a comprehensive system of personnel development. In-service training sessions and parent meetings are useful

forums for disseminating information concerning mandates and their implementation in the schools. An understanding of the mandates under which the schools must function enables those involved to plan more appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with the laws; and helps schools personnel to understand why certain educational decisions are made.

It is to the advantage of the private sector to be knowledgeable about laws that require access for the handicapped to public buildings, and about tax incentives provided for employing handicapped persons. Similarly, community agencies involved with the handicapped must be knowledgeable of mandates that affect the provision of services to these individuals both during their school years and once they leave the schools.

Follow-up (19). Once all sectors of the community are working together, and the handicapped student is placed in a work setting, regular communication and reassessment are needed to insure successful job placement. If the student is in school, it is the school's responsibility, usually through the job developer or vocational counselor, to communicate with the work site and to maintain records of the student's positive and/or negative adjustment to the workplace.

After the youth has left the schools, a less sheltered environment is available to foster post-school work adjustment. For this reason, every effort should be made to involve appropriate social service agencies to perform the critical follow-up function for out-of-school handicapped youth before the student leaves the schools. This enables the handicapped person to have resources on whom he/she can depend

through the period of transition between school and work. Parents, too, can provide a support function by assessing their child's adjustment, and by seeking additional help if they feel it is needed.

The support provided by social service agencies cannot be overestimated, since it allows the handicapped youth to venture out into the world--to try--and to succeed or fail, without permanent penalty. If the individual does not do well in one job, the agency is in a position to find a more suitable one for him/her. As with the schools, communication between agency and employer is crucial to maintaining the youngster in a successful work situation. If the student is having difficulties, the placement can be reevaluated and/or additional assistance can be provided to increase compatibility between the youngster and his/her work setting.

Follow-up, therefore, is all-important when dealing with mildly handicapped youth. Failure in a difficult work placement can be devastating to a young person who does not know where to turn for assistance. Thus, advance planning while the youth is still in the schools, can alleviate much of the stress associated with making the transition from the protected world of school to the competitive world of work.

Discussion

The linkage model presented on the preceding pages represents a first step in the development of practice to consolidate resources of the schools with those of other organizations to meet mutually identified vocational goals for handicapped students. However, from its inception, more was entailed in this project than simply generating a model. The process by which the model was structured is equally important. Consequently, discussion of the project is organized to focus on both the process and the principal product of the grant, the linkage model.

Process

The specific procedures through which the linkage project evolved are detailed in the "procedures section" of the manual. However, certain process issues were identified in the course of conducting the project that bear mention; namely, time constraints and participants commitment to the project.

Time constraints are an especially critical variable in the conduct of a one-year project involving the schools. Until final negotiations were completed, it was not possible to contact district administrators relative to involvement in the linkage project. The time required at local level for analysis of the project, for decision making, and for local selection of participants delayed full implementation of the project and highlighted many of the complexities involved in building linkages.

The professionals selected by their district demonstrated a high level of interest and commitment to the project, as evidence by their

participation in general sessions and the intensity with which they managed their sub-committee work. The same was true of the social service agency and rehabilitation professionals who, once identified, were an outstanding resource and participated actively in the project's model development. Their willingness to share their expertise with school personnel was evident throughout the project.

While representatives of business and industry showed interest in the project's goals, they were more difficult to maintain as active project members, due to competing organizational demands on their time. Nonetheless, they made substantive contributions through the recommendations they offered to facilitate school and business/industry collaboration, among them:

- o Elicit commitment from the organization's top leadership as well as from individuals responsible for carrying out job placement efforts within the organization. It was felt that this action would contribute to the organization's acceptance of mildly handicapped youth as employees.
- o Make requests for student job placements in writing. Be specific about the types of jobs sought, the characteristics of the individuals to be placed, the school's commitment to both student and organization following placement, and any other information that might assist in organizational decision making. A further point was made that the use of written communication is consistent with the way that most business organizations function.

The enthusiasm of many project participants has extended beyond the formal termination of the grant. This group views the regional linkage model as having reached only its initial phase of development. Members of the group have expressed interest in continuing to refine the model during the coming year.

Product

Three related issues were identified during development of the regional linkage model: (1) the schools as initiators of the process; (2) the communication dynamics; and (3) the organizational/individual nature of linkage endeavors. Each of these issues is discussed below.

Schools as initiators. Almost invariably, when the schools are party to establishing links to external organizations and agencies the action is taken to meet an identified educational objective. One example of this may be seen in curriculum offerings in which classroom instruction is augmented with real-world experience, e.g., vocational education, work experience. The request for real experiences requires that the schools reach beyond their own boundaries to identify and maintain a pool of experiential learning sites for students.

More than most, mildly handicapped students require "hands on" experiences to facilitate learning. To focus on this need, the regional linkage project developed a model to support the school's role to provide work preparation and job placement for in-school handicapped youth. It was recognized that neither social service agencies nor business and industry share these as primary organizational objectives. It was also recognized that by assisting the schools to meet their objectives, the potential exists to influence their own organization's functioning in positive ways. In the case of social service agencies, influence might be seen as a reduced need to provide post-school skills training programs for the handicapped; for business, influence might be seen in a better-trained entry level worker as a result of his/her prior real-world work experience. Thus, in examining the school's role in relation to meet educational objectives, it is useful to view the schools as initiators and coordinators of the linkage process.

Communication. The most pervasive and unifying issue identified through all aspects of the linkage model was that of communication. The elements of communication that were emphasized dealt with (1) the nature of communication within the schools and between the schools and other organizations, and (2) the quality of communication.

Within the schools, a need for communication as a basis for coordinating the different programs that provide real-world experiences for students was identified. It was felt that these programs can support each other, they can subvert the progress that each is trying to make on behalf of students, or they can remain independent of each other. Project participants agreed that while the schools can create a climate in which communication and program coordination occur, it is the individuals responsible for the programs who make collaborative action a reality. Communication, whether written or oral, likewise forms the basis for development of linkages between the schools and organizations and agencies that serve as external resources to the schools.

The quality of communication, as measured by indices of timeliness, clarity, accuracy, and regularity, often determines whether a linkage will be forged and, if so, whether it will be maintained. Regular communication also contributes to building mutual trust and respect among professionals, and increases their ability to perform their tasks more effectively. Ultimately, the quality of communication between individuals representing different organizations raises prospects for increased impact--in the form of improved job placement opportunities for students.

Organizational/individual linkages. While the linkage project dealt with the development of a model to promote collaborative associations among diverse organizations, e.g. the schools, businesses, social

service agencies, it is clear that this approach oversimplifies the process. For this reason, it is important to consider not only organizations but also the individuals who occupy positions within the organizations.

Organizations are established for specific purposes; they operate on the basis of profit motive, or service delivery motive, or some combination of both. Too, they have goals and objectives and operating policies that serve as the means to achieve their ends. It is therefore essential that individuals who attempt to serve as linkage agents be aware of the forces that guide operation of the organization with which they attempt to collaborate.

It is equally important to consider that organizations are composed of individuals who, in addition to being in particular positions within the organization also have their own goals and personal needs. Since these individuals are responsible for interpreting the organization's policies to others, who are outside the organization, it may be seen that the linkage process is, in fact, an interpersonal endeavor of macro-proportions. The implications of this statement are great for those who provide a linkage function within their organizations since, in addition to organizational commitment, personal commitment to the process must be evident. Only through the combined efforts of the organization and its professionals responsible for linkage functions can durable and productive links to other organizations be achieved.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMSVocational Education

ADVISORY COUNCIL (LOCAL) - A group of persons composed of representatives of the general public including at least a representative of (1) business, (2) industry (3) labor, and having an appropriate representation of both sexes and appropriate representation of racial and ethnic minorities found in program areas, that advises the eligible recipient on (1) current job needs, (2) the relevance of programs (courses) being offered by the local education agency or post-secondary educational agency in meeting current job needs and that (3) consults with the eligible recipient in developing its application.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT COURSE/PROGRAM - A course/program designed to develop the student's capacity to internalize experiences for the purpose of generalizing decisions for establishing individualized career objectives.

COOPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - A program of vocational education for persons who, through written training agreements between the school and employers, engage in supervised part-time paid employment and receive related class instruction with the employment coordinated by, and the related class taught by the same school-appointed teacher-coordinator, so that each contributes to the student's education and employment.

COURSE - An organization of subject matter and related learning experiences provide for the instruction of students on a regular or systematic basis, usually for a predetermined period of time (e.g. a semester, a regular school term). In secondary and post-secondary institutions, credit toward graduation generally is given students for the successful completion of a course.

COURSE (PROGRAM) OF STUDY - A written guide which includes objectives, course content, learning experience and activities, resources, instructional strategies (methods), student evaluation procedures and curriculum alternatives.

HANDICAPPED PERSONS - Persons who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, or other health impaired persons who by reasons thereof require special education and related services, and who, because of their handicapping condition, cannot succeed in the regular vocational education program without special education assistance or who require a modified vocational education program. All

students in the course/program will be classified by either the Child Study Team or, for post-secondary institutions, a test, diagnosis, and/or a study, by qualified professional persons.

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY (LEA) - A board of education or other legally constituted local school authority having administrative control and direction of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or political subdivision in a State, or any other public education institution or agency having administrative control and direction of a vocational education program.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION - A non-profit institution legally authorized to provide post-secondary education for persons 16 years of age or older who have graduated from or left elementary or secondary school.

POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COURSE/PROGRAM - For reporting purposes a course/program for persons who are enrolled in organized programs of study for which credit is given toward an associate or other degree, but which programs are not designed as baccalaureate or higher degree programs.

PROGRAM (Vocational) - A "planned" sequence of courses, service or activities designed to meet an occupational objective.

REGULAR STUDENT - All students who are not classified as Disadvantaged or Handicapped.

SECONDARY COURSE/PROGRAM - A course or program for persons enrolled in grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12.

SEX BIAS - Behaviors resulting from the assumption that one sex is superior to the other.

SEX DISCRIMINATION - Any action which limits or denies a person or a group of persons opportunities, privileges, roles or rewards on the basis of their sex.

SEX STEREOTYPING - Attributing behaviors, abilities, interests, values and roles to a person or a group of persons on the basis of their sex.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - Organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COURSE/PROGRAM - Secondary courses/programs must be conducted for a minimum of 650 minutes per week of which a minimum of 400 minutes must be actual hands-on skill development. The balance of the time may include the theory necessary to reinforce and enhance the hands-on skill development leading to entry-level employment.

WORK STUDY - A non-credit financial support program which is designed to help needy vocational pupils remain in school by providing them with a job outside of school hours to help alleviate their financial problems. Such pupils must be enrolled in vocational programs approved by the DVECP and they must be not more than 20 nor less than 15 years of age.

Source: FY1983 Guidelines
for completing applications
for Vocational Education
funds (P.L. 94482).

Special Education

EDUCATIONALLY HANDICAPPING CONDITION - one which impairs the pupil physically, emotionally, intellectually, academically or socially to such an extent that special education and related services as determined and described in the New Jersey Administrative Code, Chapter 6:28 are necessary to provide a free and appropriate education.

EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED - The exhibiting of behavioral disorders over an extended period of time which adversely affects educational performance and may be characterized by any of the following manifestations: an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships; inappropriate behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances; a general or pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and/or the development of physical symptoms or irrational fears relating to personal or school problems.

FREE APPROPRIATE EDUCATION - Special education and related services which conform to the following criteria:

1. The services are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge to parents or guardians, with the exception of incidental fees normally charged to nonhandicapped pupils or their parents as a part of school sponsored activities, such as dances, concerts, dramatic presentations, athletic events and similar activities which are not part of the required instructional program;

2. The services meet standards established by the State Department of Education;
3. The services are provided in conformity with the pupil's individualized education program and conform to the requirements of these regulations.

MENTALLY RETARDED - Possessing an intellectual capacity below the average range of intelligence and having deficits in adaptive behavior which adversely affect educational performance and social functioning as distinguished by the following:

1. "Educable" means a level of retardation which is characterized by intellectual capacity, as measured by a clinical test of intelligence, within a range encompassing approximately one and one-half to three standard deviations below the mean and a low level of ability to think abstractly.

NEUROLOGICALLY IMPAIRED - A severe and specific impairment, disorder or dysfunction of the central or peripheral nervous system which adversely affects the educational performance of a pupil and is not manifested as any other educationally handicapping conditions described in these regulations.

PERCEPTUALLY IMPAIRED - The exhibiting of a specific learning disability due to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding and learning and which affects the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell and learn arithmetic to the extent that special education and related services are necessary for achievement and successful performance in an educational program. This definition does not include the manifestation of learning problems which are due primarily to any of the other educationally handicapping conditions described in these regulations or to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

SOCIALLY MALADJUSTED - A pattern of social interaction which is characterized by conflicts which cannot be resolved adequately with the assistance of authority figures, or behavior that seriously interferes with the well-being or the property of others and is not due to emotional disturbance as defined in these regulations.

Source: New Jersey Administrative Code, Title 6, Subtitle F, Chapter 28.

Linkage Project

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"A Regional Model to Promote Linkage to Support
Vocational Education Programs for the Handicapped"

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RESOURCES LISTING

BERGEN

Community Resources Directory--1982
Health and Welfare Council
of Bergen County, Inc.
389 Main Street
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601

343-4900

ESSEX

Community Human Services Directory--June 1981
United Way of Essex and West Hudson Counties
303-9 Washington Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102

624-8300

HUDSON

The Directory of Human Services--September 1980
(listing private, non-profit and public agencies)
The United Way of Hudson County
857 Bergen Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey 07306

434-2628

UNION

Registry of Human Services Agencies--1981
within Union County
Union County Coalition for Human Services
Union County Courthouse
Elizabeth, New Jersey 07207

527-4862

Brendan Byrne, Governor
John J. Horn, Commissioner
George R. Chizmadia, Director



**NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY
DIVISION OF
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Labor and Industry Building, 10th Floor
Trenton, New Jersey 08626
Telephone: (609) 292-5987 (TTY) 292-2919

LOCAL OFFICES

Atlantic City
1545 Pacific Avenue 08401
609-441-3080
(Atlantic)

Bridgeton
39 North Laurel Street 08302
609-451-9098
(Cumberland, Salem)

Camden
2600 Mt. Ephraim Avenue 08104
609-757-2781; 2782; 2783
(Camden)

Cape May
Cape May County Social Service
Complex, 7-9 Delsea Dr. 08242
Rio Grande
609-886-9451
(Cape May)

East Orange
30 Evergreen Pl. 6th Flr. 07018
201-648-2882; 2883
(Suburban Essex)

Elizabeth
125 Broad Street, 7th Flr., 07201
201-648-4800
(Union)

Flemington
c/o Hunterdon Occupational
Training Center
Minneakoning Road
R. D. 6 - Box 27 08822
201-782-7081; 7089
(Hunterdon)

Hackensack
10 Banta Place 07601
201-487-7890
(Bergen)

Hackettstown
Doctor's Park, Seber Rd. 07840
201-852-4110
(Sussex, Warren)

Jersey City
2857 Kennedy Boulevard
07306
201-653-2929
(Hudson)

Morristown
7 Sussex Avenue, 2nd Flr. 07960
201-539-3660
(Morris)

If you do not find a nearby office listed, call or write the
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Newark
80 Mulberry Street
Room 201 - 07102
201-648-3367; 3445; 3493
(Newark City)

New Brunswick
29 Livingston Avenue &
New Street 08901
201-545-8120
(Middlesex)

Paterson
370 Broadway 07501
201-345-7080
(Paterson, Passaic, Clifton)

Pompton Lakes
744 Hamburg Turnpike 07442
201-835-8902
(Passaic)

Red Bank
Elsner Bldg., 54 Broad St., 07701
201-842-4700
(Monmouth)

Somerville
352 E. Main Street 08876
201-526-0550
(Somerset)

Toms River
Toms River Mall
Rt. 378 Washington St. 08753
201-929-9404
(Ocean)

Trenton
150 E. State Street 08625
609-292-2940
(Mercer)

Willingboro
Rt. 130 North, Willingboro
Village Mall 08046
609-871-6800
(Burlington)

Woodbury
81 Cooper Street 08096
609-848-5300
(Gloucester)

THE QUESTIONS

Unable to become employed because of a
disability?

In danger of losing your job because of a
disability?

Do you need assistance with training, medical
restoration, artificial appliances, job modi-
fication, job placement, or counseling and
guidance?



THE ANSWER

**The Division
of Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services**

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A person with a physical, emotional or mental disability who can pursue a gainful occupation or function as a homemaker within a reasonable amount of time may be eligible for services and assistance.

Gainful occupation includes competitive employment, self-employment or sheltered employment.

An applicant must be determined to have a disability that is a substantial handicap to employment and there must be a reasonable expectation that the services provided will enable the person to become employed.

Applicants must be residents of New Jersey and of employable age.

"Pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in the United States will be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program of the State of New Jersey on the grounds of race, color or national origin".

HOW TO APPLY?

Disabled persons may apply to the nearest office of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services listed on the reverse side. Employers, physicians and others interested in the disabled may refer individuals to the office.

A rehabilitation counselor will consult with the individual to determine what services and programs may be needed in each individual case. Many services are available without charge, especially those essential (i.e., medical examinations) to evaluate the applicant's problem. Individual counseling and guidance services and job placement are free.

WHAT KIND OF SERVICES MIGHT BE PROVIDED?

- 1) Counseling and guidance in order to work towards a suitable vocational objective.
- 2) Physical restoration including medical or surgical treatment, psychiatric treatment, prosthetic and orthotic devices, physical therapy; any of which must be directly related towards enabling the client to obtain or retain employment.
- 3) Vocational training ranging from vocational rehabilitation centers for the severely disabled, through business, technical or trade schools, including college level and on-the-job training, any of which must be suitable in terms of client's abilities, interests and the probability of employment.
- 4) Additional services such as payment for books, training materials and equipment may be provided where they are essential in preparing the client for employment.
- 5) Job placement and follow-up on the job. Selective job placement and follow-up over a minimum of two months to ensure success.

WHO DECIDES WHAT KIND OF PROGRAM AND WHICH SERVICES?

The client and counselor jointly work out an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan. This sets forth exactly what services will be provided and what is expected of both the client and the agency including responsibilities and costs, if any.

DETACH AND MAIL IN THIS APPLICATION TODAY TO YOUR CLOSEST OFFICE.

Name _____

Social Security No. _____

Address _____

County _____

Telephone Number _____

Disability _____

Age _____

Highest grade of School _____

Name, address and telephone number of person we may contact if we are unable to reach you.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Office Code _____

Counselor Code _____

Date _____

PROJECT TITLE: A Regional Model to Promote Linkages to Support Vocational Education for the Handicapped.

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Stephanie Stein, MSW

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this applied research and development project is to develop, field test, and revise a regional linkage model to bridge the handicapped student's school and post-school job training, utilizing a consortium of local professional personnel (vocational education and special education teachers), representatives of business and industry, and representatives of public/private agencies concerned with work placement of handicapped students and adults.

The rationale for such a project derives from the fact that while many local school districts operate vocational education programs for handicapped students, these opportunities usually cease when the student graduates. For handicapped youth, the skills learned while in school may atrophy from disuse once the student leaves school and he/she experiences initial failure attempting to independently seek employment.

The primary goal of the proposed project is to identify those agencies and organizations in the community that have the capability to provide a vocational-related service to the handicapped and to mesh their respective skills/talents and responsibilities to better serve mildly handicapped youth and adults in the northeast region of the state.

The major objectives of the Project are:

- o to reduce redundancy in the provision of services to handicapped youth within the schools;
- o to create a forum where representatives of organizations and agencies might come together to increase communication and mutual responsiveness to the needs of handicapped youth and adults; and,
- o to coordinate efforts among the schools, social service agencies, and business and industry to improve opportunities for gainful employment of handicapped youth.